

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 CU-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 3687

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIN, PFOR, CI, VN, MX

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S PRESS CONFERENCE: ECHEVERRIA'S COMMENTS  
ON NON-ALIGNMENT, SELA, CHILE, VIETNAM, UNAM EPISODE,  
OTHER TOPICS

1. ON APRIL 26 PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE FOR A GROUP OF CUBAN JOURNALISTS IN MEXICO CITY IN CONNECTION WITH THE CURRENT VISIT OF A CUBAN CULTURAL MISSION. ECHEVERRIA (LEA) EXPRESSED GRATITUDE FOR THE CUBAN CULTURAL MISSION AND THE HOPE THAT TIES BETWEEN MEXICO AND CUBA MIGHT BE MULTIPLIED. CULTURAL EXCHANGE HE THOUGHT "DEFENDS OUR POLITICS AND OUR ECONOMY" AGAINST "COLONIALIST THESES."

2. ON SELA: THE REPORTER ASKED ABOUT THE PROGRAM OF INITIATIVES ADVANCED BY LEA AND VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT PEREZ ON THE PROPOSED LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC SYSTEM (SELA). LEA ASSERTED THAT THINGS ARE GOING WELL AND THAT THERE WILL BE A MEETING OF "PLENIPOTENTIARIES" AT A TIME AND PLACE TO BE DETERMINED TO ESTABLISH DEFINITIVE BASES FOR SELA. HE LAMENTED THE SLOWNESS OF DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS BUT AGAIN EXPRESSED OPTIMISM ON SELA. IN RESPONSE TO ANOTHER QUESTION, HE AGREED THAT LATIN AMERICA MUST BE ON THE ALERT

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AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY THAT TRANS-NACIONALES FROM THE INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES MIGHT INFILTRATE PROPOSED LATIN AMERICAN "MULTI-NATIONAL" (SUCH AS PROPOSED LA SHIPPING COMBINE).

3. A REPORTER ASKED LEA WHAT IMPORTANCE HE ATTACHED TO A SUMMIT CONFERENCE OF NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES. HE EQUIVOCATED SOMEWHAT IN HIS RESPONSE SAYING THAT MEXICO GREATLY SYMPATHIZES WITH THE NAC MOVEMENT BUT THAT AS A RESPONSIBLE PERSON WITH CONSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR MEXICO'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, HE WAS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR ON THE MEANING OF NON-ALIGNMENT. A DEFINITION OF NON-ALIGNMENT WAS, HE THOUGHT, URGENTLY NEEDED. (COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE GOM IS CONSISTENTLY REPRESENTED IN OBSERVER STATUS AT NAC MEETINGS, LEA'S COMMENT INDICATES THAT MEXICO IS NOT YET PREPARED TO GO THE WHOLE WAY.)

4. ON CHILE: LEA TOUCHED ON CHILE WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE CHARTER OF ECONOMIC RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF STATES (CERDS). HE RECOUNTED THAT CERDS HAD BEEN PROPOSED DURING HIS VISIT TO AN UNCTAD MEETING IN SANTIAGO IN 1972. HE ACCEPTED AN INVITATION TO THE MEETING, HE SAID "AT A TIME WHEN FOREIGN INTERVENTION TO ALTER THE INSTITUTIONAL ORDER OF CHILE UNDER THE REGIME OF PRESIDENT ALLENDE WAS FELT.... (I) FELT THE URGENCY OF PROPOSING A THESIS FOR THE COUNTRIES OF THE THIRD WORLD..." LEA THEN AT SOME LENGTH PRAISED CERDS AND EXPRESSED HIS GRATIFICATION THAT MEXICO HAD GIVEN IT "A LITTLE FIRST STEP." RETURNING TO THE SUBJECT OF CHILE LATER, LEA EXPLAINED GOM POLICY ON ASYLUM FOR CHILEAN REFUGEES. HE ADDED "WHEN WE LEARNED THAT THERE WAS AN EFFORT TO FIND A COUNTRY IN WHICH TO HOLD THE MEETINGS FOR JUDGING THE CRIMES OF THE CHILEAN MILITARY JUNTA, MEXICO OFFERED TO BE THE SITE AND IT WAS CARRIED OUT HERE; I PERSONALLY INAUGURATED THE INTERNATIONAL MEETING."

5. ON VIETNAM: A REPORTER NOTED THAT LEA HAD RECEIVED A HIGH-RANKING NORTH VIETNAMESE OFFICIAL (DURING CHILEAN WAR CRIMES COMMISSION MEETINGS) AND QUOTED LEA AS EXPRESSING ADMIRATION AND RESPECT FOR THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE IN ITS CONFIDENTIAL

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HEROIC RESISTANCE AGAINST THE AGGRESSION OF UNITED STATES AND OTHER IMPERIALIST FORCES. THE REPORTER THEN ASKED: WHAT IN YOUR OPINION SHOULD BE THE ACTION OF SOLIDARITY OF THE THIRD WORLD TO SUPPORT VIETNAMESE RECONSTRUCTION AND PRESERVE IT AGAINST THE DANGER OF A NEW AGGRESSION. LEA REPLIED, "THE GREATEST SOLIDARITY BECAUSE IT IS THE TYPICAL CASE OF AGGRESSION AGAINST A THIRD WORLD COUNTRY. THIS IS THE REASON THAT THE DISTINGUISHED REPRESENTATIVE OF THE

PEOPLE OF VIETNAM WAS RECEIVED BY US IN SUCH AN AFFECTIONATE MANNER."

6. ON VISITING CUBA: ASKED AGAIN ABOUT WHEN HE MIGHT VISIT CUBA, ECHEVERRIA SAID THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO VERY MUCH BUT POINTED OUT THAT MEXICO IS BEGINNING A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND THAT HE EXPECTS THE VISITS OF MANY HEADS OF STATE IN MEXICO THIS YEAR. HE GAVE NO INDICATION THAT HE PLANS TO VISIT CUBA IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

7. ON UNAM EPISODE: A REPORTER REFERRED TO THE INCIDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY ON MARCH 14 WHEN "YOU WERE THE OBJECT OF AGGRESSION WHICH YOU DENOUNCED AS ENCOURAGED BY CIA AGENTS." THE REPORTER ASKED HOW INVESTIGATIONS WERE PROCEEDING ON THIS SUBJECT AND IF IN ECHEVERRIA'S JUDGMENT THE CIA PLANS TO ENCOURAGE REACTIONARY SECTORS AND HARM RELATIONS WITH CUBA. THE PRESIDENT'S RESPONSE AGAIN WAS EQUIVOCAL. HE SAID THE INCIDENT WAS VERY COMPLEX AND HE POINTED OUT THAT MANY UNAM STUDENTS ARE "WELL-DRESSED ADOLESCENTS" WITH HIGH INCOMES. REFERRING APPARENTLY TO THE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST CIA, HE SAID "IT IS TRUE THAT I SAID THAT BECAUSE IT SEEMED TO ME THAT ONE MIGHT DEDUCE THAT IT WAS NOT LEFTIST GROUPS WHICH WERE DIALOGUING OR ARGUING WITH ME." "BESIDES, IT WAS A PHYSICAL AGGRESSION AGAINST EVERYONE LEAVING THE AUDITORIUM; IT WAS NOT LEFTIST GROUPS WHICH PROVOKED THE DISORDER." "WHEN I LEFT THIS HOUSE, I GOT IN THE CAR AND SAT IN THE FRONT WITH THE DRIVER AND WENT ALONETO THE UNIVERSITY AND I GOT OUT BY MYSELF AND ENTERED IN THE MIDST OF A GREAT TUMULT." "IT WAS AN ANTI-PROGRESSIVE PROVOCATION WHICH WE COULD EASILY IDENTIFY AS AN INTERNATIONAL THING. THE INVESTIGATION IS VERY DIFFICULT AND PERTAINING TO ADOLESCENTS WHICH I BELIEVE BELONG TO THE MIDDLE CLASSES OF HIGH INCOME, TO GROUPS WHO HAVE SEEN TO ONLY THEIR ECONOMIC INTERESTS  
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AFFECTED BUT WHO ARE TROUBLED BY A POLICY OF LIBERTY AND BY ZDE FACT THAT WE HAVE THIS KIND OF RELATIONS WITH CUBA, THAT WE HAVE TALED WITH HIGH SOVIET LEADERS, THAT WE HAVE FOUGHT STRONGLY IN THE UN WITH MY PERSONAL INTERVENTION IN OCTOBER 1971 FOR THE RECOGNITION OF PEKING..., THAT WE HAVE STIMULATED CLOSER RELATIONS WITHIN LATIN AMERICA." "...WE HAVE NOT WANTED TO START A WITCH HUNT OF DISORIENTED YOUTH... I HAVE DECIDED THAT THERE WILL NOT BE A POLICE INVESTIGATION..." "ON THE OTHER HAND, SOME VERY INTERESTING THINGS ARE HAPPENING. JUST YESTERDAY THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE ROGERS MADE SOME DECLARATIONS AGREEING WITH THE LATIN AMERICAN THESIS, WITH THE MEXICAN THESIS, SAYING THAT THE SELA WOULD BE USEFUL... IF IT IS NOW RECOGNIZED IN THE UNITED STATES THAT SELA WOULD BE A GOOD THING (CONVENIENTE); THIS IS A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE. IS THIS DUE

TO THE DEFEAT IN CAMBODIA, IN VIETNAM? WE DON'T KNOW."

(COMMENT: ON THE UNAM INCIDENT, LEA'S COMMENTS WERE FAR FROM AN ACCURATE REPRESENTATION OF THE FACTS. THE EMBASSY KNOWS THAT CONSIDERABLE INVESTIGATION WAS CONDUCTED BY GOM, THAT THE PRIME MOVERS OF THE MARCH 14TH INCIDENT WERE ON THE EXTREME LEFT, AND WE HAVE EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT LEA IS FULLY AWARE OF THESE FACTS. HOWEVER, AS INDICATED IN MEXICO 2507 (EXDIS, NOTAL) ECHEVERRIA STRONGLY FEELS THAT IT IS IN GOM INTEREST (AND, IN HIS VIEW, THOSE OF USG) NOT TO MAKE PUBLIC TRUE FACTS OF UNAM INCIDENT.

8. COMMENT: OBVIOUSLY PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA FELT HIMSELF AMONG FRIENDS AT THIS PRESS CONFERENCE. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT HE HAS NOT IN ANY SUBSTANTIAL WAY ALTERED HIS EARLIER POSITIONS ON ALLEGATIONS OF UNITED STATES INTERVENTION IN CHILE OR ON THE NATURE OF THE UNAM INCIDENT. THOUGH HE DID NOT REPEAT HIS ACCUATIONS AGAINST THE CIA, HE DID HINT THAT "INTERNATIONAL" RAMIFICATIONS MIGHT BE UNCOVERED IF THE GOM WISHED TO DO SO. IT IS ALSO OF COURSE INTERESTING THAT HE MAKES THE INTELLECTUAL LEAP FROM VENTS IN INDO-CHINA TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS' COMMENTS ON SELA. WE MAY EXPECT SIMILAR INTERPRETATIONS ON UNITED STATES POLICY ACROSS A BROAD RANGE OF SUBJECTS IN THE FUTURE NO MATTER HOW REMOTE FROM THE EVENTS IN SEA.

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